

help train teachers to improve their skills. Funding under title II is significantly increased, by almost \$3 billion. Though almost \$2 billion come from consolidating class size reduction funds with other teacher training funds, this represents a significant increase for teacher quality programs.

Unlike children in wealthier communities, children in the poorest schools more often do not come to school ready to learn, not in the first grade, not in any grade. These are the children that have to deal with distractions at home. They face dangerous surroundings, both in and out of school. And they go to schools that are falling apart, have the largest classes, and may not have enough classroom space, forcing some to take place in hallways, cafeterias, gymnasiums, or worse. These children face many obstacles to getting a solid education, and need the best teachers.

Another major improvement included in H.R. 1 is the doubling of title I funds within 5 years. These funds are the main Federal resources that are intended to fill in the gaps between poor schools and wealthier ones and are very much needed. While these funds are doing a great deal of good in many schools, we know the program is currently underfunded and that we need to help many more students. Doubling title I funds over the life of this authorization is a good start toward providing disadvantaged students with the best educational opportunities available, improving teacher quality, and helping struggling schools help themselves.

But there are major problems with this bill. Chief among these is the new annual testing provisions in grades three through eight. These tests simply point out failure, and in many cases are used inappropriately for high-stakes decisions. H.R. 1 fails to provide enough resources to either help students or schools succeed.

H.R. 1 is written with the premise that if we test children enough, we'll know which students are failing, and thus, which teachers and schools are failing. This legislation promotes the idea that if a child fails, the solution is to take away the teacher, or move the child to a different school. And it perpetuates this notion by providing some funds to some schools that fail, but does little to ensure the school has enough resources to succeed in the first place. The annual tests contained in this bill will not be a vehicle for success, but rather a harbinger of punishment for children, teachers, principals, and schools. In the end, it will be communities that suffer from the misplaced emphasis on these tests.

H.R. 1 makes some resources available to failing schools, but not enough. In the 1998–1999 school year, States identified 8,800 schools as needing improvement. Since different States use different standards, this may understate the number of failing schools. And with the new annual tests under H.R. 1, it's likely even more schools will fail. However, this bill authorizes only \$500 million to help these schools. While this builds on President Clinton's effort over the last 2 years to provide additional funds for low-performing schools, it does not go nearly far enough to provide the kind of intensive, high-quality support failing schools still need.

H.R. 1 is grievously flawed if it passes the House without sufficient resources to help failing schools. Of the schools identified by States as needing improvement in 1998–1999,

only 47 percent of these principals said they got any additional help from their district, from their State, or from the Federal Government. That's less than half. And while these schools are more likely to get help the longer they've been identified as needing improvement, the help isn't likely to come anytime soon. 70 percent of principals in a school that's been struggling for 3 years saw no additional help, and even 38 percent who ran a school that's been struggling for 4 years saw no additional help. Almost a third of principals in struggling schools had no idea what their districts considered to be "adequate yearly progress", the State's benchmark for what constitutes success.

Almost half the title I schools identified as low-performing in 1998–1999 were 75 percent or more minority and eligible for free and reduced price lunch. These schools simply cannot turn themselves around without real help.

This issue is not just a national one, but a very local one for me and many of my colleagues. In many of my communities in Hawaii, three-quarters or more schools have been identified as low-performing. Part of this has to do with our State strengthening its education system, but much of it is also a direct result of these schools not having the resources in the first place to provide a high-quality education. Without the necessary additional resources, these schools will continue to fail, and the annual testing provisions in H.R. 1 will only serve as a vehicle for punishing these schools and disrupting communities rather than making a sincere effort to provide help.

Linked to this flaw is the potential havoc public school choice may wreak. The public school choice provisions in H.R. 1 take a backward approach to providing resources to the children that need them most. The intent of ESEA has always been to help poor schools give kids the best education possible by providing them with more resources. H.R. 1 turns this on its head by dictating that, instead of bringing the resources to the student, bring the student to the resources. That logic is inherently backward.

We should not be focusing time, effort, and money on disrupting and dismantling children's base of security, the neighborhood school. Instead, we should be sending in reinforcements: adequate funding, so poor schools have the same chance to succeed as wealthier schools; qualified, strong, and experienced teaching staff, so they form a crucial foundation and get to know students and their individual problems; and the kind of learning atmosphere that voucher proponents endorse private schools for: smaller class sizes, extended learning time and tutoring before and after school, schools that aren't crumbling, schools with computers and modern wiring and infrastructure. We need to turn this debate right-side-up again. Instead of forcing the child to go where the resources are, we should be doing what we should have done all along—bring the resources to the child.

There are other significant problems with H.R. 1. One of the most significant is the various ways it undermines education for students with limited English speaking skills, and those who are recent immigrants. The most important issue is that H.R. 1 blockgrants all of the existing programs for these children into one formula program, but provides too little overall to be distributed in sufficient quantities

to be effective. These programs currently are competitive grants and thus are more targeted to students that need them. By turning all these programs into a block-grant, H.R. 1 dilutes these funds, providing less services to the students that most need them. H.R. 1 should keep these programs competitive at least until funding reaches \$1 billion.

H.R. 1 also contains a dangerous provision for limited English proficient students, requiring schools to get approval from their parents prior to giving these students access to bilingual education services. This provision could cause significant delays in schools providing these children with an education. These are the most vulnerable of our students—they may have little understanding of our systems, little capacity to understand directions people are giving them, and little chance of becoming dedicated to a system they can't comprehend. By inserting this onerous provision in ESEA, the bill will simply disrupt or even deny to our neediest children educational opportunities on an equal basis, as required by Brown versus Board of Education.

In the end, this bill tries hard to retain some of the best things in ESEA, and even adds some good new ideas, such as the Reading First program. But one good idea cannot disguise many bad ideas. In an apparent fervor to block-grant programs with no consideration for effectiveness, H.R. 1, for example, eviscerates the Class-Size Reduction Program. This is the one program that will really help with reading. It is research-based and scientifically proven to work, as is required of all other programs in the bill, and flexible enough to be used for improving teacher quality. Combined with a genuine effort to help communities repair and build new schools, the Reading First Program and the Class-Size Reduction Program might have actually driven change in education for disadvantaged students.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER), a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today as an original cosponsor and strong supporter of the President's No Child Left Behind Act. Why do I support this meaningful education reform legislation? Because, for the first time, more children are going to be able to read in this country. Parents are going to get a report card as to how their children's school is performing, and children now trapped in a failing school will have a safety valve to get out.

Mr. Chairman, we do these goals by three key measures. First, we will invest an additional \$5 billion over the next 5 years in reading for children in grades K–2. This is critical since currently approximately 70 percent of our fourth graders in inner-city schools cannot read. We must address this issue head on.

Second, we will require that States annually test our children in grades three through eight in reading and mathematics. It is critical to measure their performance on an annual basis to ensure that no child falls through the cracks.

How many times have we turned on the television to see a college athlete